



*Hartford Brainard Airport Association, Inc.  
9 Timberwood Road  
West Hartford, CT 06117*

**Board of Directors:**

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**Senate Bill 1197, An Act Concerning Workforce Development**  
Education Committee  
March 15, 2023

Hartford Brainard Airport Association (HBAA) is a grass-roots organization of general aviation, private and commercial pilots, business leaders and others dedicated to preserving Hartford-Brainard Airport as a valuable community asset and vital economic resource that supports Connecticut's economy and provides significant benefits to the capital city and region. HBAA works to promote the educational opportunities that already exist at Brainard, encouraging city and regional residents to pursue careers in the fields of aviation and aircraft maintenance. HBAA supports all general aviation activities and recognizes its critical importance in stimulating growth and vitality of our community.

**HBAA strongly supports Senate Bill 1197 and urges the Education Committee to approve the bill.** Thank you to the committee for raising and introducing the important policy of aviation workforce development. Senate Bill 1197 will help develop the state's workforce by training students for aviation and aerospace manufacturing careers.

Specifically, Senate Bill 1197 authorizes boards of education to provide an aerospace and aviation apprenticeship training program to students through partnerships with local businesses and requires the Technical Education and Career System to form a working group to determine the feasibility of developing an aerospace advanced manufacturing high school. The training program would include on-site training for students to learn job skills and earn course credit and provide information to students concerning programs offered at CT Aero Tech School for Aviation Maintenance Technicians, which is on-site at Brainard Airport, and assistance with applications to the school.

As members of the Education Committee know, there is a severe national shortage of trained aviation technicians in the country and this shortage is reflected in Connecticut's workforce. According to management consulting firm Oliver Wyman, while the gap between supply and demand of pilots has recently declined slightly, a shortfall of pilots nationwide is projected to still



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be about 17,000. Industry efforts to reinforce the pipeline and investments in training programs and pilot recruitment are helping to reduce the gap. There is also a significant shortage of aviation and aircraft mechanics. Oliver Wyman estimates a shortfall in the number of aviation maintenance workers in North America this year, and like the situation with pilots, it will worsen as the decade progresses. The firm projects a gap between supply and demand of mechanics of 12,000 to 18,000. The gap represents about 14% of the total mechanic workforce.

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association advocates for additional workforce development programs to address looming shortages in aviation. Its president recently highlighted before Congress AOPA's initiative to increase the aviation workforce through its High School Aviation STEM Curriculum, and Congress is considering policies to address aviation workforce challenges.

High paying jobs for well-trained aerospace technician graduates are readily available in central Connecticut's "Aerospace Alley", a conglomerate of dozens of small and large manufacturing concerns in the region that support general aviation and the commercial aircraft and jet engine manufacturing industry. The need for skilled workers in this area must be met by visionary leaders in the Technical Education and Career System, since retention of these manufacturers in our state is critical for Connecticut's economy. This retention depends on an adequately trained workforce to meet their needs.

CT Aero Tech is helping to fill the need in a deliberate way. The school graduates twenty-five certificated Aircraft and Powerplant technicians annually, all of whom have immediate job entry careers in local businesses with starting annual salaries of about \$50,000. Given an expansion opportunity and proper state support, CT Aero Tech could help graduates entering worthy aviation maintenance careers.

HBAA supports and encourages the participation of boards of education in these initiatives and the continued efforts of CT Aero Tech to establish a pipeline for students to earn technical degrees and become aviation maintenance technicians. This will help meet demand by supplying the



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**Board of Directors:** much-needed technical workforce that supports the state's many general aviation manufacturing companies.

**Michael Teiger, MD**  
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